

One Hundred Ninth Congress
U.S. House of Representatives
Office of the Democratic Leader

November 18, 2005

Secretary Michael O. Leavitt
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt,

You and other experts have told the American people that there is a serious threat of an influenza pandemic in the coming years. Confronting this challenge will take a real commitment of resources, particularly a commitment to state and local governments, who will be on the front lines of the crisis.

The recently released *National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* and the more comprehensive *Health and Human Services Pandemic Influenza Plan* identify a number of responsibilities that will be left to the state and local governments. These responsibilities include: monitoring the spread of disease; treating and containing the disease; and coping with a possibly overwhelmed health care system. These tasks will be immense, and could be beyond the capacity of many states.

While the Administration's plans give the states a number of responsibilities, the President's proposed budget only includes \$100 million for state and local preparedness efforts. We are concerned that this money is not sufficient for states to adequately prepare for a pandemic.

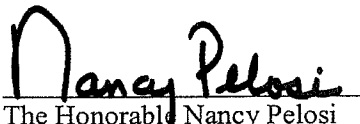
In order to properly evaluate the President's budget request, we are writing to ask you to provide us with certain information regarding state preparedness:

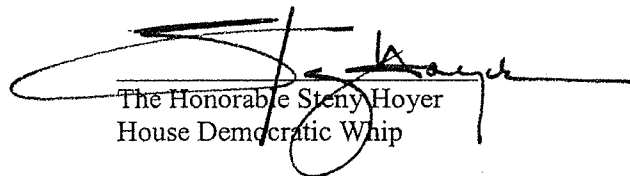
- What indicators will HHS use to determine whether a state is adequately prepared for a pandemic? If those indicators have not been developed, when will they be developed?
- In your judgment, how many states are currently adequately prepared for a pandemic?
- What will it cost the states to move from their current state of preparedness to being judged adequately prepared for a pandemic? If you do not have a cost estimate, when do you expect to have an estimate?

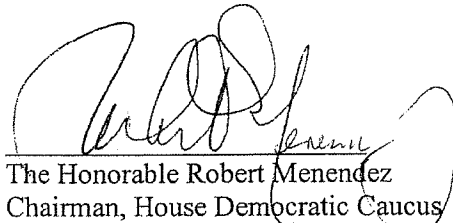
Finally, the plan that you made public last week constitutes parts 1 and 2 of the overall plan that HHS will be releasing. We would like to know when part 3, the Operation Guidance for HHS's Agencies, will be available.

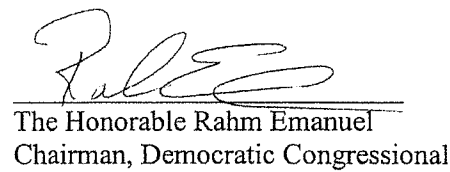
Because Congress will be considering this issue during the coming weeks, we ask that you respond by December 1, 2005.


Sincerely,

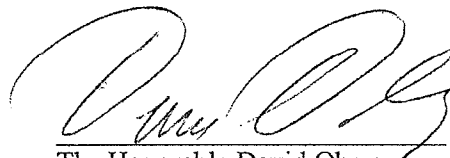

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Democratic Leader

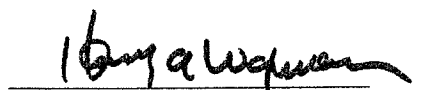

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Democratic Whip

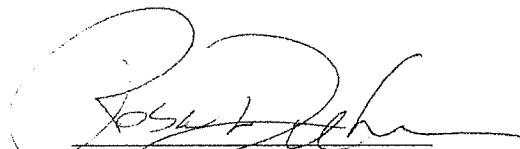

The Honorable Robert Menendez
Chairman, House Democratic Caucus

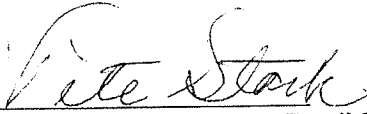

The Honorable Rahm Emanuel
Chairman, Democratic Congressional
Campaign Committee


The Honorable John D. Dingell
Ranking Member,
Committee on Energy & Commerce

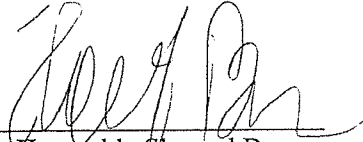

The Honorable David Obey
Ranking Member,
Committee on Appropriations


The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member,
Committee on Government Reform

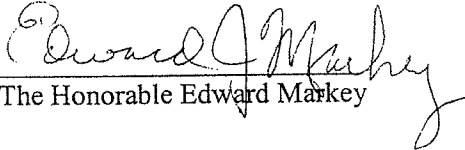

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Co-Chair, House Democratic
Steering & Policy Committee



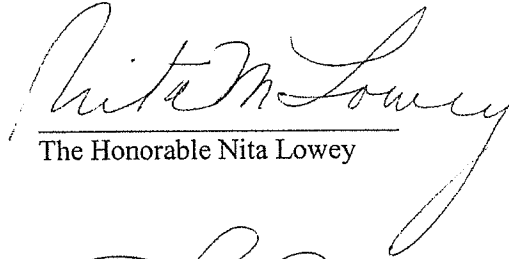
The Honorable Fortney H. "Pete" Stark
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Health, Committee
on Ways & Means



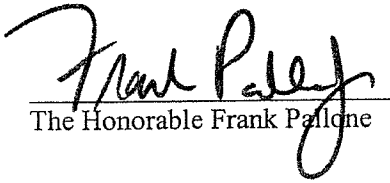
The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Health, Committee
on Energy & Commerce



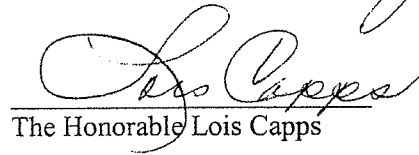
The Honorable Edward Markey



The Honorable Nita Lowey



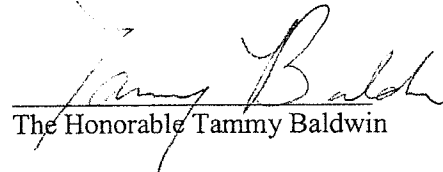
The Honorable Frank Pallone



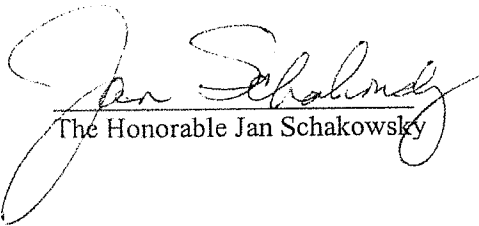
The Honorable Lois Capps



The Honorable Diana DeGette



The Honorable Tammy Baldwin



The Honorable Jan Schakowsky